

**EXHIBIT A**

# Chapter 1 Addendum

## *Introduction*

The Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Austin City Council in 1979. This approval followed nearly a decade of intense deliberations by the citizens of Austin regarding critical choices facing the future of the Austin region. This was in direct response to rapid changes that Austin had experienced in the previous three decades. From 1950 – 1980 the population of Austin more than doubled (The City of Austin’s population increased from 132,459 to 345,890, and the region’s population increased from 256,645 to 585,051). The prevailing development pattern changed from traditional mixed use neighborhoods tightly focused around downtown to sprawling low density/single use development typical of the post-war period.

Austin residents involved in the development of the Austin Tomorrow viewed these changes from two distinctly different perspectives. Some were excited about the prospect of the Austin Region growing into a premier metropolitan area that offered unparalleled cultural and economic opportunities. Others were concerned that sprawl development patterns lacked identity and were threatening Austin’s sense of community, stunning natural environment, and fiscal viability. The Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan sought to introduce policies and strategies that accommodated the anticipated growth while mitigating their negative environmental, social, and fiscal impacts.

Many of these policies and strategies have subsequently been implemented. A series of ordinances and initiatives implemented in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s resulted in greater protection of water quality, endangered species, and other environmental resources. Other initiatives were designed to strengthen neighborhoods, direct growth into desired development zones, promote a greater mixture of land uses, revitalize downtown, provide affordable housing, and foster development patterns friendly to transit, walking, and bicycling. These initiatives are summarized in the Chapter 4 addendum and are the primary source for the proposed changes included in this interim update.

## *Interim Update Process*

At the direction of the City Manager, the Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department staff reviewed the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan during the summer and fall of 2007 to test the feasibility of completing an interim update. The concept was to accomplish an update by integrating and consolidating existing adopted policies into the existing Austin Tomorrow document. A proposal to complete this interim update was forwarded to the Comprehensive Planning Committee of the Planning Commission and subsequently the full Planning Commission passed a resolution recommending that the City Council authorize the proposed update. The City Council passed a resolution on December 13, 2007 authorizing and directing an interim update of the Austin Tomorrow

Comprehensive Plan This resolution also requested that the Planning Commission and City Manager study the long term planning needs for Austin within the context of the Austin Region beyond the interim update.

In January of 2008, an interdepartmental team began a review of Chapter 2 “Goals, Objectives and Policies”. This team met a total of 5 times and crafted changes and additions to obsolete portions of Chapter 2 and reviewed drafts of proposed updates to the Chapters 1, 3, and 4. After the staff review was complete, a preliminary draft of the proposed update was forwarded to the Comprehensive Planning Committee of the Planning Commission for review. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the draft Plan on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and forwarded the recommended changes to City Council on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008

### *Summary of Changes*

#### Chapter 2 Changes

Chapter two contains general policy statements that guide the remainder of the plan. This Chapter is the result of extensive and direct involvement by the citizens of Austin. The Planning Commission and the City Council approved this chapter before the development of the growth management strategies contained in Chapters three and four

Austin Tomorrow emphasized the need for the City of Austin to use a full range of techniques to accomplish the recommended growth management strategies. These included recommendations to aggressively manage the extension of utilities to promote desirable development patterns. Changes in State law and City policies have limited this tool to guide development and this update reflects some of those changes

Many of the environmental policies of Austin Tomorrow have been implemented by the passage of ordinances, initiatives, and the public acquisition of environmentally sensitive property. To a large extent, the changes to the environmental policies recognize these ongoing implementation efforts

Austin Tomorrow contains a series of economic development policies directed towards discouraging economic expansion that promotes in-migration and open access to negotiations and agreements regarding public/private partnerships. Some of these policies have been modified and others removed. Some of the changes reflect the practical necessity to balance the need for confidentiality while providing open and transparent public access to the decision making process.

Austin has developed and implemented plans, programs, and policies to encourage the production of affordable housing. The Housing and Community Development section has been extensively modified to reflect these changes

### Chapter 3 Addendum

The Addendum to Chapter Three summarizes the major issues and policy choices that Austin was facing while developing the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. It compares the plan's critical assumptions regarding the negative impacts of sprawl against the population and development patterns that emerged since its adoption

### Chapter 4 Addendum

The Chapter 4 addendum summarizes the process that was used to identify the preferred growth areas recommended by the plan and their implementation strategies. It also summarizes and categorizes major planning initiatives that have been undertaken since the plan was adopted. These initiatives are brought together in a summary fashion and are presented in graphic form as a new "growth concept map".

### Conclusion

While this interim update process has provided an important forum to integrate and coordinate Austin's existing growth and development related policies, it is, by definition, limited in scope. It does not, by design, provide an interactive forum to engage the entire Austin Community in a coordinated process to comprehensively think about the future of the City within the context of the Austin Region. It does not fulfill the need for a plan to proactively address the critical public policy issues and tradeoffs associated with the anticipated population and employment growth of the Austin region for the next 20-30 years. Due to the specific requirements contained in the 1985 charter amendment, in relationship to the content of the existing Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, this cannot be accomplished through an update of the Plan, but would require the development of an entirely new plan.



## Chapter 2: Goals, Objectives and Policies

### *Introduction*

The goals, objectives and policies presented in Chapter 2 are the results of a collaboration between the citizens of Austin and the City staff, between lay people and professional planners. From 1974-1977 citizens from all over Austin participated in determining goals for the city during the Austin Tomorrow Goals Program. Although the City staff provided research and background material, the findings and recommendations are entirely the citizens'. The results were published in 1975 in the Austin Tomorrow Goals report and adopted by the City Council as the basis for the Comprehensive Plan. Chapter 2 presents the citizens' views in detail.

Discussions among the participants in the Austin Tomorrow Goals Program focused on nine designated topics which were later condensed into eight topics, or sections, of Chapter 2: Urban Design, Economic Development, Environmental Management, Government and Utility Services, Housing and Neighborhoods, Transportation Systems, and Health and Human Services. An introduction precedes each section and summarizes its primary goals. The goals, objectives and policies which follow contain the essence of the citizens' concerns. In this context, goals represent values, or desired results, objectives refer to intermediate stages in the attainment of the goals, and policies are guidelines for action leading to objectives and, ultimately, to goals, objectives and policies are often followed by brief commentaries for clarification and elaboration.

This chapter is significant because it represents a vision of Austin shared by many citizens. This vision is the foundation for the entire Comprehensive Plan, for the discussion of environmental development suitability in Chapter 3, and for the growth management policies that conclude the plan in Chapter 4. As such, it should be the basis for all Planning Commission and City Council decisions concerning the future of Austin.

### *Urban Design Introduction*

Urban design is concerned both with the development and management of the physical environment of Austin. This section represents a concerted effort to recognize the positive qualities of Austin, encourage the enhancement of those qualities and improve the living environment, where necessary. The overall objective is to provide general policy guidelines for development and redevelopment responding to issues related to the "design", "image", "character" and "form" of Austin. These are measurable in terms of quantity and quality and provide a means of cataloguing the current state of the environment, and guiding its future course.

The process which identifies "what Austin is" in terms of the above classifications should enable the public and private sectors of the city to determine what environmental and social qualities need to be retained, enhanced or included in development proposals. The process of urban design should synthesize various interests in the community.

The Urban Design section arises from the Austin Tomorrow Goals Program, and includes major concerns arrived at by community consensus. These represent a starting point which will eventually be expanded to include other concerns of the city as they arise. The four goals are 1) to encourage development of Austin's urban environment in the manner most compatible with the natural environment; 2) to provide transportation facilities throughout the city which enhance neighborhoods and districts while facilitating safe, efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians, 3) to encourage quality development of pedestrian facilities by giving greater emphasis to pedestrian environments in development proposals, and 4) to preserve the historical past of Austin by assuring that development and redevelopment proposals consider structures and areas of cultural, historical or architectural value.

### **GOAL 110.0 ASSURE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE UNIQUE NATURAL AND CONSTRUCTED FEATURES OF THE AUSTIN AREA.**

The elements of Austin's physical form are generated by individual development actions. The resulting form is a product not necessarily compatible with the environment or reflective of the constructed elements of the community or its values. The concern of this goal is that isolated development proposals be compatible with the development of Austin in terms of form and size.

#### **Objective 111.0 Ensure the compatibility between potential development and the existing natural environment.**

Austin's natural environment includes such features as diverse topography, natural vegetation; natural habitats supporting a variety of wildlife, complex natural drainage systems, and stable climatic conditions supportive of the existing natural environment.

It is necessary to determine the type and location of these natural elements that make up the city. These elements are in some instances limited and not replaceable once they are destroyed. The identification and classification of these elements would enable designers or developers to modify their plans in a way that would be more compatible with the natural landscape of the city.

**Policy 111 1 Establish special districts based on unique environmental features and apply development standards appropriate to each area**

The City should determine special development districts based on common environmental properties or development constraints. The identification and classification of unique and important features or districts should ensure compatible development based on these properties. Examples of the natural elements within the city that would affect development or establish special district limits are (1) landscape and open space—wooded areas and other types of open space, (2) views and vistas—vantage points that provide identity and a means of orientation to the community, (3) water areas—natural open spaces such as creeks, streams, and rivers, (4) topography—change in the elevation of the natural landscape, and (5) climatic conditions—temperature, light, precipitation, sun and wind.

**Policy 111 2 Protect visually prominent areas and corridors from inappropriate development activities**

Identification, analysis and mapping of the unique visual features and landmarks in the community should be conducted. Visually prominent areas, features and corridors should be delineated and all development and redevelopment proposals should be reviewed to ensure that they preserve and enhance these valuable community assets.

**Policy 111 3 Encourage site planning techniques and building form arrangements that are tolerant of natural topographic conditions**

The review process for development proposals should include standards that encourage structural designs which do not require extensive manipulation of the site. Cut and fill operations which influence surface water runoff should be reduced in order to retain vital topsoil.

*Policy 111.4 Encourage development to maximize the use of existing natural vegetation and regulate the removal of significant trees and valuable vegetation*

The City should regulate the removal of trees and vegetation on all City-owned property and review all proposed municipal projects to ensure against the loss of existing natural vegetation

In the case of day-to-day projects, this is accomplished by standard operating procedures. In instances where larger projects are proposed, the development review process ensures that all environmental requirements are fulfilled. All development is required to adhere to Austin's Land Development Code Chapter 25-2 and 25-8. The landscaping and environmental portions of this code addresses care of existing vegetation, including trees, to capture the multiple benefits of the existing natural character. Additionally, the City of Austin's Environmental Criteria Manual Section 2 and 3, Landscape and Tree and Natural Area Protection respectively, describes specific details of accomplishing these requirements.

*Policy 111.5 Encourage public and private development to replace significant trees and vegetation removed during construction*

This policy should result in greater care to existing vegetation during a project's physical development in order to maintain as much of the existing natural character of a site as possible

All development is required to adhere to Austin's Land Development Code Chapter 25-2 and 25-8. The landscaping and environmental portions of this code addresses care of existing vegetation, including trees, to capture the multiple benefits of the existing natural character. Additionally, the City of Austin's Environmental Criteria Manual Section 2 and 3, Landscape and Tree and Natural Area Protection respectively, describes specific details of accomplishing these requirements.

*Policy 111.6 Formulate and continue support of design techniques and construction guidelines for development in proximity to water resources and floodplains*

This policy should incorporate, combine and clarify existing standards, ordinances and agencies. This will provide optimum development standards suitable to water resource areas and protection of water quality and natural resources during the construction process.

Multiple regulations that support water quality and floodplain protection have been adopted, including Land Development Code 25-7-92, which limits development in the floodplain, and 25-8-92, 25-8-93, 25-8-261 and 262 of the Land Development Code which establishes the Critical Water Quality and Water Quality Transition Zone, and allowed development within these zones, as well as Section 1.7 of the Environmental Criteria Manual which regulated Floodplain Modification.

#### **Objective 112.0 Monitor development to ensure a quality environment.**

*Policy 112.1 Develop urban design capabilities within City planning agencies to actively develop urban design codes, ordinances and policies, and review development proposals to encourage design quality based on public desires*

The Urban Design section of the Comprehensive Plan needs to be reinforced with policies and strategies based on a process involving input from the community and organization from the City. Urban designing occurs throughout the community, however inadvertently, and it is an integral part of the planning process. The process needs to be presented, and citizens need to be made aware of urban development and how it affects their lives

*Policy 112.2 Evaluate the effects of development on the image, character and physical characteristics of Austin*

The criteria for review, as they affect Austin's natural and constructed environment, could be based on the following activities (1) formulating city-wide design objectives resulting from participation of all sectors of the community, private and public; (2) developing distinct or specific project design objectives and controls in the city-wide context, (3) providing staff for consultation with developers to negotiate potential alternatives, (4) providing staff to coordinate with other affected agencies on special issues, and (5) using special consultants to resolve conflicts.

This process should help determine the impact of development proposals and completed projects by answering these questions Will there be a gain or loss of environmental characteristics? Does a real need exist and is the priority valid according to systematic growth policies? What are the costs to the community and who pays?

**Policy 112.3** *Develop a public information program which promotes recognition and appreciation of those natural, unique and constructed elements considered valuable to the community*

The natural elements and constructed features of the community that promote a feeling of pride and unity should be given special recognition. The attention given to these features would discourage their destruction by insensitive development

## **GOAL 120.0 PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE DESIRABLE IMAGE AND CHARACTER OF NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS.**

**Objective 121.0** Assure that development is responsive to the established identity of areas and districts.

**Policy 121.1** *Establish special design districts within the city*

The requirement for special districts would be based on the existence of some unifying feature of unique interest to the community. Some special design districts could be: areas along major thoroughfares, areas abutting major institutions and open space, major parks and parkways, areas fronting major waterways and tributaries, the Central Business District, areas abutting transportation terminals and major commercial districts

**Policy 121.2** *Encourage the use of building materials that respect and improve the integrity of neighborhoods and districts.*

New development can enhance and preserve Austin's distinctive qualities if it is designed with consideration for the prevailing design character and effect on the surrounding environment.

**Policy 121.3 Encourage a continuing awareness of the long term effects of growth upon the physical form of the city**

The process of urban development results from a complex relationship between public and private decisions over a period of time. Maintaining citizen-government interaction on growth policies should make it possible to choose the physical form of the city based on current needs and trends.

**Policy 121.4 Recognize the natural boundaries of separate or distinct districts and promote their harmonious connection**

Visually prominent features such as extremes in topography, water areas, trees and roadways are natural boundaries between districts and neighborhoods. The positive effects of district boundaries should be emphasized in design decisions affecting visually prominent features such as new roadways and large scale landscaping. Connection between districts and facilities should be improved, with special attention given to the possibilities for landscaped pathways that would provide alternative visual experiences as one moves about the city.

**Objective 122.0 Ensure that potential development or redevelopment of a specific area is compatible with the image and character of the area or its surroundings.**

The objective is to determine which visual characteristics provide a sense of identity and structure to both the city as a whole and its distinct parts. Image and character elements would be classified by a process that would (1) determine the existing shape of the city, (2) identify and analyze the size of the existing natural and urban physical elements, (3) analyze the mixture of sizes to determine homogeneity or heterogeneity, (4) determine the density of areas, and (5) determine the shape of the city's sub-areas.

**Policy 122.1 Adopt design criteria for proposed development to assess its impact on the image, form and character of the city**

Quality development that enhances the established character of Austin's unique natural and constructed features should be encouraged on a community-wide level. Design criteria would result from a consensus of the community based on a visual survey of the city

A visual survey would provide the means of identifying the basic components of the city that produce its form, appearance, composition, problems and potential environments. The analysis of the survey would provide insight into possible ways Austin could maximize its resources through the process of urban design.

Application of the analysis should determine which areas of the city need reinforcement in terms of number, quality and type of image elements. Classification of the elements that produce an image for Austin are (1) paths—circulation routes, (2) nodes—centers of activities; (3) edges—termination of districts, (4) landmarks—prominent visual features, (5) districts—distinct areas of the city, (6) generators—people attractors, and (7) linkage elements—connections between areas and people.

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan. Bicycling is a component of Austin's Image and helps shape the character of the City.

*Policy 122.2 Promote building forms that relate to the size, shape and character of the surrounding development*

Buildings and structures that stand out in excess of their public importance detract from the character of surrounding development. Height and bulk limitations in special districts have been established and successfully incorporated into comprehensive plans in other municipalities.

Compatibility standards and McMansion Ordinance are both examples of how Austin supports this policy.

*Policy 122.3 Provide greater flexibility in the zoning process to facilitate design innovation*

Revision of the elements of the Zoning Ordinance which inhibit design potential is essential in achieving high quality design of buildings and subdivisions.

**Objective 123.0 Reduce the negative effects of automobile traffic in neighborhood environments.**

*Policy 123.1 Protect residential areas from excessive levels of noise pollution and physical danger from traffic*

A plan to protect residential areas should be developed that would prevent or discourage heavy, fast and through traffic on residential streets and place such traffic on arterial streets where the impact on residential areas would be less disruptive. The speed and volume of traffic should be limited through various methods' narrowing intersections and streets in special districts, creating the appearance of narrowing through landscaping techniques, and prohibiting visual access from arterial streets by signs and barriers. These changes should result in residential streets with a predominantly pedestrian, rather than automobile, character. Bicycle lanes and facilities can also contribute to protecting neighborhood environments from traffic

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan. A portion of this policy previously promoted the discontinuation of streets to divert traffic which contradicts Land Use Code Section 24-4-151, "Street Alignment and Connectivity."

*Policy 123.2 Provide adequate buffering for residential neighborhoods against the effects of high traffic volumes*

When heavy traffic volumes must go through residential areas, adequate care should be taken to ensure against disrupting existing environments as much as possible. Incorporation of landscaping techniques, screening walls, changes in topography and building setbacks all provide substantial buffering against undesirable effects

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

**GOAL 130.0 IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SURFACE TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS AND THEIR ADJACENT ENVIRONMENTS.**

Transportation facilities should be used to unify urban development patterns, be compatible with the hills and valleys and provide access to visually prominent areas and open space. Transportation systems should accommodate the movement of people and join the diverse districts of the city in the most desirable manner.

This Goal is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

**Objective 131.0 Ensure that transportation networks emphasize desirable urban development patterns.**

Transportation systems establish urban patterns and provide organization and a sense of place to the community. These systems should also provide travelers with an awareness of the physical organization of the community.

**Policy 131 1 Encourage transportation patterns that reinforce the image and identity of distinct areas and districts**

There are existing Bicycle routes signed throughout the City which designate them as a bicycle corridor, giving identity to these distinct areas

**Policy 131 2 Develop and continue support of a city-wide plan for street landscaping to indicate the relative importance of streets**

Once the purposes of transportation facilities have been established, street features should be designed to express those purposes and make the entire system understandable to the traveler. A relatively easy element that can be adjusted to the street system is landscaping. A landscaping plan should be developed that indicates the relative importance of streets by the degree of formality of tree planting and the species and size of the trees

In addition to recognizing differences in transportation functions, the plan would also recognize the width and visual importance of certain streets, the special nature of distinct activities, and the need for screening or buffering of residential uses along streets carrying heavy traffic. Special consideration should be given to certain features such as major intersections, open space and important views in the design of transportation facilities

Streetcape landscaping requirements are an integral part of adopted Subchapter E, Design Standards and Mixed Use that was adopted August 31, 2006 and effective January 13, 2007, and the Environmental Criteria Manual Appendix A was modified to include a list of suitable street trees

**Policy 131 3 Develop a city-wide plan for street lighting to facilitate clear, safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian movement, and aid crime control**

The design and placement of street lighting should reflect the intended use of the facility. Intensity, hue, source, location and placement system should be coordinated with street design and adjacent usages to optimize clarity of function.

**Policy 131.4 Improve the ease of movement along transportation systems and support facilities**

Many improvements can be made in street areas and their surroundings to increase the ease and safety of travel. Once such improvements have been made, adequate maintenance is of equal importance. Among the least difficult improvements would be development of a better system of directional signs, instructions, messages, symbols, graphic design and sign placement.

Although trafficway signs should be improved, the purpose and direction of traffic networks should also be made as clear as possible through design of the networks themselves. The roadway should be consistent in width and materials, with channels separated by islands and dividers, where possible, and changes of direction made distinct. At intersections, the differences in importance and function of the intersecting streets should be made visually clear by differences in roadway width, landscaping and lighting.

The number of streets intersecting at any one point should be minimized, and signs and traffic control devices should be adequate to indicate the movements permitted in all traffic lanes. The roadway environment should be simplified and made attractive through screening of distracting and unsightly elements by landscaping, walls and buildings. The clutter of wires, signs and disordered development should be reduced.

Conflict between unnecessary private signs and street directional signs should be avoided.

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

**Objective 132.0 Ensure the visual quality of transportation networks and their support facilities.**

The scope of transportation planning, design and implementation should be expanded to include consideration of types of material used, amount of detail desired and appropriate form needed to convey harmony between the system and its environment

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

*Policy 132.1 Preserve the visibility of unique areas and other points for orientation*

The ability to see one's destination and other points of orientation while traveling through the city is an important product of the urban pattern. Design and determination of street placement, the control of land uses and building types along streets should take these special features into account. Views from streets and other public areas should be preserved, created and improved where they include water, open spaces, large buildings or other major features of the city. Entrance views to the city and to districts are of special concern in this respect, as are lateral downhill views that show a panorama or corridor with prominent features.

*Policy 132.2 Remove unsightly and cluttering elements from street right-of-way*

Clutter is produced by unplanned elements in street right-of-way. The placement of overhead wires underground should continue at the most rapid pace possible. Every other element in street areas, including public signs, should be examined with a view toward improvement of design and elimination of these unnecessary elements to improve visual clarity.

Section 2.2.2 B.3 of the Design Standards and Mixed Use Ordinance recommends burial of overhead utility lines along core transit corridors.

**GOAL 140.0 IMPROVE EXISTING PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENTS AND ADEQUATELY PROVIDE FOR PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES IN PROPOSED URBAN DEVELOPMENT.**

Pedestrian environments are classified into two systems, movement and non-movement. Movement systems should provide the linking elements between the pedestrian nodes or non-movement systems. Incomplete access to either system causes a feeling of incohesiveness, unsafe pedestrian movement and unclear priority between transportation systems. Policies should be adopted that stabilize and improve the appearance and safety of pedestrian facilities and increase the opportunity for recreation.

The 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan and current Sidewalk Master Plan project support this item by providing tools to prioritize pedestrian needs. Generally, the emphasis on Pedestrian amenities should be removed from the Comprehensive Plan unless bicycles and transit are also singled out for specific recommendation.

#### **Objective 141.0 Assure that new development is responsive to pedestrian needs.**

The concern of this objective is to assure that added consideration is given to the pedestrian environment in development or redevelopment proposals.

The 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan includes a sidewalk prioritization tool which is used to help transportation reviewers within the Watershed Protection and Development Review department assess sidewalk variance. The 2002 Complete Street Resolution supports this Policy. Sections 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and 2.2.4 of the Design Standards and Mixed Use ordinance specify enhanced sidewalk standards for core transit corridors and urban/suburban roadways.

#### **Policy 141.1 Encourage or require the provision of recreational or open space in private development**

Open space should be provided in large developments, especially in areas of high population and building density. In the downtown area, well designed plazas with public access and good exposure to sunlight serve this function. Some of the recreation needs of occupants in apartment developments should be satisfied on the site itself, or through joint use of space by several properties in the block.

Section 2.7.3 of the Design and Mixed Use Ordinance requires that a minimum of 2% of the net site area be established as a private common open space.

*Policy 141.2 Encourage development that provides human scale and interest to pedestrian areas while maintaining an optimum level of safety, security, convenience and comfort*

The design and development of pedestrian environments should be scaled to their surrounding environments. The quantity and quality of pedestrian facilities should also be determined by their location. As the physical, psychological, and visual experience changes from one area to another, so must the pedestrian atmosphere change. Accommodating changes in the environment should not preclude basic concerns such as the reduction of pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Security can be increased through observation by pedestrians and police. Convenience may be improved by relocating and reallocating pedestrian facilities.

Section 2.2 of the Design Standards and Mix Use Ordinance identifies standard roadway types and assigns building placement standards based on roadway types.

**Objective 142.0 Assure the retention of the positive characteristics of pedestrian environments.**

Many of the neighborhoods of the city offer pleasant and exciting environments to residents, while others have experienced physical decline and less than full utilization. Ensuring the desired quality and well-being of the community should begin by retaining those characteristics which enhance pedestrian environments. No other single element contributes to the pedestrian environment more than trees.

The 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan provides for the prioritization of new sidewalk needs. The 2002 Complete Street Resolution also supports this objective.

*Policy 142 | Recognize, protect and reinforce existing pedestrian environments*

Existing pedestrian features should be preserved and integrated with other elements of the urban environment. The identification of pedestrian elements in neighborhoods makes it possible to utilize them in the design of urban systems. Protecting these environments assures their quality and prevents intrusion upon their space by other systems. Increasing the sense of place in pedestrian environments may be accomplished by using design elements such as different materials, textures and form to enhance the identity and character of the surrounding environments.

The 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan provides for the prioritization of new sidewalk needs. New sidewalks recognize, protect, and reinforce the pedestrian environment. The 2002 Complete Street Resolution also supports this objective.

*Policy 142.2 Develop a community-wide plan that would ensure safe and convenient access to recreational space.*

The basic concern of the plan would be to ensure accessibility to recreational space for all citizens. Some space should be within walking distance of every dwelling, and in more densely developed areas some sitting and play space should be available in nearly every area. Larger facilities which accommodate more people should be easily accessible by marked transportation routes, separated walkways and bicycle paths

*Policy 142.3 Provide adequate maintenance for pedestrian areas to encourage their use.*

Unsightly facilities caused by lack of maintenance can detract from the enjoyment or prevent utilization of designated areas. A maintenance program should include equal commitment from the public and private sectors of the community to provide or upgrade designated areas

The update to the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan includes a sidewalk maintenance prioritization tool. Public Works, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program expects the update to be completed in 2008, which needs to be adopted by Council.

**GOAL 150.0 PRESERVE THOSE ELEMENTS, BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, OBJECTS, AND DISTRICTS WHICH REFLECT THE DIVERSE HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF AUSTIN.**

The preservation of a considerable portion of such landmarks and districts as evidence of the rich inheritance of the city is desirable for public education, enjoyment and general welfare of Austin citizens and the attraction of tourists, with attendant economic benefits.

The National Historic Preservation Act protects buildings, structures, objects, and districts but the City of Austin chooses to retain 'elements' to not limit preservation efforts. Policy changed to conform to standard historic preservation language

**Objective 151.0 Assure the protection of notable and/or historic landmarks and areas of historic, architectural, cultural, or aesthetic value.**

There is no provision in the Code so far to protect iconic landmarks, although, a provision was inserted into the Code that specifies that a landmark could be less than 50 years old if it possesses significance as defined by the National Historic Preservation Act

*Policy 151 1 Expand the City's effort to identify and recognize important structures, sites and districts that represent Austin's heritage and character*

The program of official historic designation for individual landmarks and historic districts should continue to be developed and implemented to encourage community awareness, expansion of preservation efforts in the future, and recognition of sites of historical, architectural, and cultural significance

Revisions reflect code change to Chapter 25-11 via ordinance 20060622-128 which deals with establishing historic districts

*Policy 151 2 Review and revise codes which inhibit and apply to the preservation, restoration, and use of designated historic landmarks and historic districts*

Analyze federal, state, county and City codes, policies or laws which affect the protection, use and preservation of historic landmarks and historic districts, and introduce proposals to increase their effectiveness,

Revisions reflect code change to Chapter 25-11 via ordinance 20060622-128 which deals with establishing historic districts. Ordinance 740307-A serves to 'safeguard the city's historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such historic landmarks by appropriate regulations'.

*Policy 151 3 Provide incentives for property owners that encourage use and preservation of historic landmarks and historic districts.*

A program for financial, professional or skilled assistance should be adopted and implemented to encourage greater use of landmark properties. Implement and review policies for economic incentives for the rehabilitation, adaptive re-use, and preservation of historic landmarks and historic districts. Implement and review policies for the recognition of historic landmarks and historic districts

Revisions reflect code change to Chapter 25-11 via ordinance 20060622-128 which deals with establishing historic districts.

**Objective 152.0 Assure the retention of the character of designated historic areas, landmarks and districts.**

The guidelines and recommended procedures applied to the restoration of designated landmarks and areas should also apply to development and redevelopment proposals in these areas. The result should be a more compatible development between the existing character of deemed historical areas and new development proposals

Revisions reflect code change to Chapter 25-11 via ordinance 20060622-128 which deals with establishing historic districts.

*Policy 152.1 Formulate design guidelines that enhance restoration efforts*

Policies which affect access to the property, approach views, signs traffic patterns and other urban elements should be investigated, reviewed and implemented to enhance significant historic features.

*Policy 152.2 Promote harmony in the visual relationship and physical transition between new and old structures.*

The design of new buildings that are located near historically designated structures or areas should be modified to prevent distraction from the importance of these community elements

**NOTE** While the goals and policies contained in this section generally remain valid, the definition, general principles, and importance of urban design have all changed and evolved since the plan was adopted.

A new comprehensive plan for Austin should clearly define the community's desired Urban Design goals and policies for both public and private projects. The new plan should articulate the importance of Urban Design and its critical relationship to the community's continued high quality of life and economic vitality. It should also define necessary procedures and steps to implement urban design policies and best practices.

### *Economic Development Introduction*

Economic development in Austin should involve the participation of a broad section of citizens, both from the standpoint of determining economic directions, and of enjoying economic benefits and focus on the vision of making Austin the most livable city in the country. To achieve these ends, four primary issues were developed in the Goals Program management of urban and economic growth, employment, preservation and improvement of the natural and cultural environment, and municipal fiscal stability. Performance standards for the above goals should be defined. Methods of monitoring, quantifying and reporting the effects of the City's efforts should be developed to assure that these issues are correctly addressed.

The City's vision states that "we want Austin to be the most livable community in the country."

### **GOAL 210.0 AUSTIN'S ECONOMY SHOULD PROVIDE A STABLE, HIGH LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT AND FULLY UTILIZE HUMAN RESOURCES WHILE MAINTAINING NATURAL AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION.**

The objectives and policies presented here conclude that an economic development process is often necessarily one of balancing or trading off goals which are traditionally exclusive. It is necessary, therefore, that the process be conducted in the public sphere with community participation. Municipal governments have traditionally had limited ability to control local economic events. If an urban growth management program is to be used to reach goals of stability, low unemployment and environmental quality, it must have jointly acceptable performances and tests for local economic development and be aligned with environmental protection and land development policies.

The following objectives and policies are intended to provide the mechanisms and directions necessary to assure that future economic development is consistent with community values.

Council Resolution 050113-52 amended 030612-15 to strengthen the connection between Economic Development Policy and Environmental Protection Policy

**Objective 211.0 Develop a municipal economic policy that is consistent with the community's desire to manage growth and its effects.**

The City should provide an appropriate forum with adequate information for public examination and continuous review of the issues surrounding the formulation of municipal economic policy. This forum should be broadly representative of the city's population

The City of Austin is committed to serving the public by implementing programs and policies benefiting all citizens and geographic areas. The City of Austin enjoys high levels of quality amenities benefiting new and existing businesses and strives to influence economic development resulting in quality of life for its citizens.

*Policy 211 1 Evaluate and report on the status and trend of the local economy with particular emphasis given to the impact of existing and proposed municipal policies upon economic growth and stability*

Several private and public organizations are engaged in monitoring relevant local economic variables. Information from these sources should be supplemented where necessary and implications for the local economy determined. City staff should use the best fiscal and economic analysis techniques. National economic events should not be ignored, since they will eventually affect Austin through variations in national demand for locally produced goods and services and through fluctuations in the local money markets. This information should be presented in the public forum. The City should also promote the continued existence of the eclectic small businesses found city-wide that have helped capture the image of Austin

The policy revisions are supported by the City of Austin Economic Development Policy 2005 that is authorized by Council Resolution 20030612-015. The resolution creates a business Development Division in the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office to assist small businesses, artists, arts groups, and organizations on business development and other topics resulting in the creation of a "single point of contact" for economic development. The resolution also seeks to improve the coordination of city departments providing services to small businesses through regular interdepartmental meetings on issues that could impact small business owners.

*Policy 211 2 Evaluate the potential impacts of migration, employment and per capita income arising from specific cases of proposed industrial, or more generally, economic growth*

It is very important to examine the characteristics of a potential new firm. The effects on employment, the long run stability of employment, per capita income and interindustry relationships may vary greatly between industries. The

short and long run results of acquiring a new industry must be carefully examined if economic health is to be maintained. Consideration should be given to the wage and skill levels of a proposed industry's employees for compatibility with Austin and regional needs.

*Policy 211.3 Estimate the fiscal impact on City of Austin facilities and services.*

In the case of a large or significant development, at least, an examination of the fiscal impact on the City should be undertaken. Fiscal impact, while important, must be considered in the overall context of economic and environmental effects.

**Objective 212.0 Anticipate and control the environmental impact of economic growth.**

Recent industrial growth has been characterized by very low levels of direct environmental pollution. Indirectly, however, any increase in economic activity, employment and population leads to pressures affecting the environment, if it is not wisely managed.

City of Austin shared investments should be limited to developments located in the Desired Development Zone, and firms must agree to comply with current and future water quality regulations for all current and future projects during the term of any economic development agreement.

Urban growth fueled by economic expansion is expending more and more of the natural features which contribute so greatly to the quality of life in Austin. Air and water pollution are becoming more frequently visible. Residential developments are encroaching upon the most valuable and precarious watersheds and natural areas. Economic growth and prosperity should not be enjoyed at the cost of environmental degradation.

A moderate, healthy rate of economic expansion should be attained without destruction of the many natural features which are so greatly valued. Careful attention should be paid to primary and secondary economic factors through the application of rigorous environmental, economic and fiscal performance criteria. These should permit adequate growth in job opportunities while protecting those community features which make Austin a desirable place to live.

Policy revisions are supported by Council Resolution 030612-15 amended by Resolution 050113-52 The Mayor's 2007 Street Smart Task Force looked at the Economic benefits to being a Bicycle Friendly City and will be proposing recommendations to Council in 2008 in this area.

**Policy 212.1 *Undertake careful assessment of the possible direct and indirect environmental impact of economic development***

A relatively complete understanding of the direct and indirect environmental impacts of economic development is required before the community can intelligently participate in an evaluation of proposed development. It is important, therefore, that the results of such analysis be presented to the public in a straight-forward, understandable manner. Economic development policies should include controls to ensure that proposed development maximizes positive environmental impacts while minimizing negative environmental impacts.

Policy revisions are supported by the City of Austin Economic Development Policy 2005 that is authorized by City Council Resolution 20030612-015.

**Policy 212.2 *Design, adopt and enforce standards which would require new industries or businesses to meet specific environmental impact criteria.***

Such standards should be quantified to the greatest extent possible and effectively enforced. These standards should be codified in subdivision, zoning and various environmental impact ordinances. It is important that these controls be extended as far as possible outside Austin's city limits to ensure their effectiveness. In addition to meeting minimum requirements relating to water quality protections, new developments should be encouraged to achieve high levels of green building standards

Policy revisions are supported by the City of Austin Economic Development Policy 2005 and the Austin Climate Protection Plan and Zero Waste Plan.

**Policy 212.3 *Environmental impact analysis of economic development should include the effects of the construction required to provide utility and transportation facilities.***

Environmental impacts resulting from public facility construction have not in the past been given enough attention. In the future such attention should include an examination of (a) population carrying capacity, (b) location and patterning of service nodes, and the time-distance relationships within the immediate locality and throughout the total urban environment, and (c) the direct destructive or reconstructive impact on the natural and cultural environment

Austin Bicycle Plan adopted 1998 recommends bicycle facilities on most major thoroughways which should be considered as viable methods to move people to and from targeted locations.

#### **Objective 213.0 Encourage full employment of all segments of Austin's population.**

The frequency and magnitude of periodic increases in unemployment should be kept as low as possible. The historical immunity of the Austin economy from the employment fluctuations associated with the national business cycle should be maintained.

Policy revisions reflect the findings of the Mayor's Task Force on the Economy (2002) which states "government, civic, and business leaders need to challenge all economic sectors and institutions, including their own institutions of government, to become cultures of innovation. The consequences for any metro area that does not respond to this challenge are low productivity, stagnant living standards, and reduced opportunity for its citizens" and led to Council Resolution 0306012-15, establishing a Comprehensive Economic Policy for the City of Austin.

#### *Policy 213 | Evaluate proposed developments in terms of their potential impact on local economic stability.*

Industries should be favored that match the region's competitive advantages, support the cultural sector, result in viable opportunities for the local workforce, and are among the targeted industries for future economic growth.

Policy revisions reflect the findings of the Mayor's Task Force on the Economy (2002) which states "the national economy is the key to the short-term outlook for Austin" and led to Council Resolution 0306012-15, establishing a Comprehensive Economic Policy for the City of Austin.

**Policy 213.2 Attention should also be given to interindustry relationships in assessing the long-term desirability of proposed industries**

Those industries which would create strong interindustry ties in the local economy and which would be very sensitive to the national business cycle would tend to increase cyclical unemployment in the local economy. On the other hand, these industries would also exert strong job-creating forces during periods of national economic resurgence.

**Policy 213.3 Occupational requirements of proposed industries should correspond to the occupational characteristics of the local unemployed labor force**

This policy reflects a strong preference to provide jobs for unemployed and underemployed Austin residents rather than to stimulate in-migration. Industries with corresponding requirements should be viewed more favorably than industries which would depend upon in-migration to satisfy their labor requirements.

**Policy 213.4 Growth of employment in state agencies should be projected and evaluated in order that the community impact of this growth may be known and incorporated into the formulation of economic development policy**

The lack of a centralized personnel management system for State agencies makes evaluation of this growth difficult, but an attempt should be made to continually monitor the source of growth as well as assess its impacts.

Policy revisions reflect the Texas Workforce Commission funding on employment trends for the Texas State Government.

**Objective 214.0 Reduce the number of economically disadvantaged persons through greater utilization of human resources.**

The relative affluence of most Austin citizens often overshadows the persistent problem of inadequate incomes for some. Low incomes are often attributable to insufficient or inappropriate education and skill attainment. Readily accessible educational and job training services should be provided to those in need.

This is a more difficult task than is usually assumed. A very substantial undertaking in this area will be required to make a significant impact on unemployment and underemployment resulting from insufficient skill and educational levels

*Policy 214.1 Existing employment training programs should be continued, expanded and their effectiveness measured*

The federal manpower training program no longer exists. The City of Austin provides funding to Skillpoint Alliance, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that builds partnerships among industry, education and the community to foster college and career success for Central Texans, while meeting employers' needs for a qualified workforce. The contract is currently managed by the City of Austin's Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Offices. The goal of Skillpoint Alliance is to encourage life-long learning, improve career opportunities and build self-sufficiency while strengthening Central Texas as a region that attracts and retains good jobs.

*Policy 214.2 Encourage proposed new industries to participate in job training programs and seek greater participation from State agencies.*

Participation in job training programs should be considered in evaluating the desirability of proposed developments. Firms which have low skill level entrance requirements should employ and train underskilled, unemployed Austin residents to the greatest extent possible. These programs should be designed to allow employees to increase their job skills.

*Policy 214.3 Seek federal and private resources to establish a fund for minority economic development loans. These loans should be supplemented by a business management assistance program*

Potential minority entrepreneurship should be encouraged by facilitating small business loans. Business administration assistance could be provided by student volunteers and retired businessmen

*Policy 214.4 Employment services should be made more effective and located in or near low income neighborhoods.*

Decentralization of all appropriate services should continue Transportation for the physically and financially disadvantaged should be improved

**Objective 215.0 Provide relief from the constraints of low incomes through innovative utilization of existing public resources and services.**

Often many persons cannot hope to escape the burden of poverty through skill development, especially the elderly and large families without multiple wage earners Federal welfare assistance may not prove adequate to provide a standard of living which facilitates wholesome human development. For these reasons, the City should make every attempt to find underutilized municipal facilities which may be made available in constructive ways to Austin's disadvantaged citizens

*Policy 215.1 Job opportunities for low skill, low income persons should be made easily accessible through inexpensive public and/or private transportation*

Underskilled persons face many barriers to employment but accessibility is one that can be resolved with relative ease through the provision of an adequate, inexpensive transportation system

Deleted 'mass' based on consensus

*Policy 215.2 Appropriate municipal facilities and properties should be made available for various community purposes.*

Undeveloped municipal property in low income neighborhoods could be made available for such purposes as community gardens A community food marketing cooperative could be established to augment community gardens.

*Policy 215.3 The utility rate structure should be made less regressive to cushion the impact of rising fuel costs on disadvantaged persons and to encourage conservation*

For a discussion of the utility rate structure see "Government and Utilities", Chapter 2, Section 4

*Policy 215.4 Utility services should not be terminated for nonpayment in the case of very disadvantaged households*

The City should refer such cases to appropriate public and private social organizations and mutually develop a schedule of extended repayment

**Objective 216.0 Continue expansion of economic opportunity through the elimination of racial, ethnic, and sexual discrimination.**

*Policy 216.1 Continue implementation of the five-year Affirmative Action Plan of the City of Austin*

The City's commitment to equal employment opportunity has been reaffirmed through the adoption of policies designed to assure that the municipal government sets a proper example for the community to follow. The municipal administration should persist in efforts to achieve the goals set forth in the Affirmative Action Plan. The effect of this effort should be monitored

*Policy 216.2 Continue enforcement of the Equal Employment Opportunity Ordinance by the City of Austin.*

The City has adopted an Equal Employment Opportunity Ordinance designed to further Austin residents' efforts to obtain employment without regard to race, sex, religion, national origin or physical handicap. This ordinance parallels the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. It recognizes the responsibility of municipal government to prevent illegal discrimination

*Policy 216.3 Assure that appointments to all boards and commissions are representative of the entire community.*

The general public interest should be adequately represented on boards and commissions

### *Environmental Management Introduction*

Within the context of this plan, environmental management refers to the monitoring and regulation of society's impacts on natural physical elements. The environmental features of the Austin area which are deemed to be of public value by the community should be protected by the City.

The application of adequate and proper land use regulations remains the most important single instrument of locally administered environmental protection. The fundamental premise to be incorporated into these regulations is that the urban and suburban development of land should be restricted in areas with limited ability to absorb urbanization without severe environmental degradation, and in instances where plans for development disregard environmental constraints

### **GOAL 310.0 PRESERVE LARGE AMOUNTS OF OPEN SPACE AND ASSURE THAT THE MOST SUITABLE NATURAL AREAS ARE SO-RESERVED.**

Open space is defined as land which is neither occupied by private lots nor dedicated as public streets. Open space must be defined differently according to its proximity to urbanization. The concept of open space outside the urbanized area includes private lands. Its preservation is aided by a compact urban form and the retardation of urban sprawl. Open space within the city proper must be designated as common land, unless the open space is purchased as part of the Water Quality Protection Lands, Balcones Canyonland Preserve, or other managed mitigation lands, the term should not refer to undeveloped pockets of private land unless the land is restricted through a conservation easement. The reservation of ample amounts of open space does check, to some extent, gross population densities within the city. This coincidental effect, however, is not considered adequate to place the goal in direct conflict with the density considerations of "Government and Utilities", Chapter 2, Section 4.

1992 Bonds provided for \$22 million for acquisition of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve. 1998 Bonds provided for \$65 million for Water Quality Protection Lands. 2006 Bonds provided for an additional \$50 million for open space acquisition. Ordinance 2007-1108-121 (Land Development Code, 25-8-27) established the Button Springs Zone Mitigation Fund for the purchase of open space in the Barton Springs Zone. Open space has been preserved through numerous Development Agreements and PUD's (such as the Steiner Ranch, Forum PUD, Lowe's Sunset Valley Development Agreement (20050324-048))

**Objective 311.0 Discourage development in the areas of greatest environmental or agricultural value.**

The determination of high environmental value is dependent on public goals and public opinions. Environmental value may incorporate such features as lush or mature vegetation, particularly mature trees, habitats capable of supporting varied wildlife; interesting geologic features, interesting topographic relief, natural drainage waterways and their environs, water quality, water recharge to aquifers, and the potential for erosion, as in areas of steep slope. Agricultural value refers to the capabilities of the land for field crop use.

The Smart Growth Initiative (970905-A) established the Desired Development Zone (DDZ) and the Drinking Water Protection Zone (DWPZ) as a growth management strategy. Targeted open space acquisition has been implemented thorough the Water Quality Protection Lands and Balcones Canyonlands Preserve. 100- and 25-year floodplain development is limited through Section 25-7-92 of the Land Development Code (LDC). water quality setbacks are established through the Critical Water Quality and Water Quality Transition Zones (LDC 25-8-92 and 93; Critical Environmental Features and Wetlands are regulated (LDC 25-8-281 and 28), steep slopes are protected by the Net Site Area calculation (LDC, 25-8-62) and through limitations on allowed construction on slopes (LDC, 25-8-301 and 302). Removal of trees and natural area preservation are regulated (LDC, 25-8-601 and 627).

*Policy 311.1 City policies concerning utility extension and annexation should include the consideration of environmental value.*

Consequently, these policies should continue to be used to discourage development in areas of high value while encouraging development in more appropriate locations. Large scale decisions involving creek watersheds or other large areas should, therefore, be influenced

Chapter 25-9, Division 2 (Extension of Service), of the Land Development Code establishes standards for approval of service extensions and allows for an Environmental Assessment to be required to evaluate the impact of the request for service extension. A number of annexation and development agreements also address these concerns, including the Stratus (Circle C) agreement (August 15, 2002), Robinson Ranch Annexation and Development Agreement (040617Z-12), Bradley Parties Agreement (August 2000), Steiner Ranch Agreement, the Lowes Sunset Valley Agreement (20050324-048), and the Webb Troup Agreement (1997).

*Policy 311.2 Require impact assessments for all major extensions of utilities and roads*

All extensions of utilities and roads should be analyzed according to their direct and indirect effects on the environment and land use. Public and social benefits must be weighed against public and social costs. This should particularly apply to all Capital Improvements Program projects.

Chapter 25-9, Division 2, of the Land Development Code allows for the requirement of an environmental assessment for the extension of utility service. The 2025 Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan (AMATP) includes an Environmental Sustainability Matrix for roadway projects in the Groundwater Recharge Zone (approved by Planning Commission October 9, 2002), and the River Place Development Agreement, approved May 22, 1984.

**Policy 311 3 Direct utility expansion away from areas of high resource value**

A growth management policy should continue to determine areas in which growth will be facilitated, and areas where growth will be discouraged. This policy should be based, to a large degree, on the preservation of natural resources with high public value.

The Drinking Water Protection Zone should typically be excluded but include evaluation of the environmental benefit that the extension of service might enhance, especially where it eliminates septic systems over areas with unsuitable soils. Where the City has obtained a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCNs) from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the City has the legal obligation to provide water and/or wastewater service in accordance with the City's service extension request ordinances depending upon the type of certificate. The Water and Wastewater CCNs (Certificates of Convenience and Necessity) excludes the Drinking Water Protection Zone (DWPZ). The Land Development Code (13-9-34) requires City Council approval for extension of service when it is located outside of the approved CCN and within the DWPZ but outside the City's full-purposed corporate limits.

**Policy 311 4 Investigate the use of tax policies to encourage land use of low intensities on certain lands with high environmental value**

In order to delay development of certain important natural areas, the City should consider utilizing some form of tax assessment based more on use value than speculative market value. Tax relief is important because increased taxes due to surrounding, rising market values are a deterrent to the retention of undeveloped land.

*Policy 3115 Create special districts, based on environmental characteristics, and apply appropriate development requirements.*

Continue support of regulations that divide Austin's jurisdictional areas into several large districts according to common environmental characteristics or constraints, engineering properties or water resources Continue support of subdivision requirements which vary accordingly from district to district Special overlay districts have been successfully coupled with subdivision controls in other municipalities The use of overlay districts for each regulated special constraint provides alternatives, and the concept should be continued in subdivision regulations Encourage and support the development and continuation of similar special districts and implementation measures, in areas beyond Austin's ETJ, by other planning and regulatory jurisdictions in Travis, Hays, and Williamson Counties

The Smart Growth Initiative (970905-A) established the Drinking Water Protection Zone (DWPZ) and the Desired Development Zone (DDZ) as a growth management tool Watershed classifications were established in section 25-8 of the Land Development Code that created different development restrictions in the form of varying impervious cover limitations, limits for development on slopes, waterway setback requirements, and water quality control requirements for the treatment of stormwater runoff which are based on the sensitivity of each watershed, and its role in water supply

#### **Objective 312.0 Place important natural areas in the public domain.**

Regulation through use of the City's police power cannot always achieve the public interest and may create too great a burden on private landowners

Continue the acquisition of property in fee simple, or the purchase of certain property rights, such as easements 1992 bonds provided for \$22 million for acquisition of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, 1998 bonds provided for \$65 million for acquisition of Water Quality Protection Lands, and 2006 bonds approved an additional \$50 million for open space acquisition The establishment of the Barton Springs Zone Mitigation Fund (Land Development Code, 25-8-27) is for the purchase of open space in the Barton Springs Zone to offset the impacts of redevelopment in that zone The Town Lake corridor study (October 1985), the 2000 Roma "Austin Town Lake Corridor Study," and the Waterfront Overlay Districts established in the Land Development Code also support this policy

*Policy 312.1 Purchase unique areas in advance of development.*

A list of unique areas in Travis County should be developed immediately and maintained. Priorities for acquisition should be established. Plans and programs should be developed. Whenever possible, acquisition of open space, particularly of unique areas, should take place in advance of urban pressure.

See previous reference to purchase of Water Quality Protection Lands and open space provided for by recent Bond elections and statement regarding Balcones Canyonlands Preserve systems

*Policy 312.2 Preserve unique natural areas through the acquisition of easements*

Easements may be purchased and under certain conditions their dedication may be required. Scenic and conservation easements should be pursued, perhaps concurrently with drainage and utility easements, during the development of subdivision plans. In some cases the City may purchase the development rights attached to property.

Ideally, all such easements acquired should be shown on the recorded subdivision plats. Acquisition after the subdivision is recorded increases the likelihood of error regarding the existence of such easements.

A major amendment to the 1998 Austin Bicycle Plan is currently underway; there are ideas presented for the update which include merging off road trails into the plan as transportation corridors, which would include securing easements and possibly utilizing existing drainage easements. Coordination between Departments will be essential to realizing this Policy to its full potential.

Purchasing of conservation easements is included in the strategies for land purchases made through the Water Quality Protection Land and Open Space property acquisitions referenced above.

*Policy 312.3 Create and maintain subdivision controls to lessen the impact of new development on important natural areas*

The subdivision ordinance is the major land use control for new development. Major environmental objectives include alleviation of flood damage, erosion and poor drainage practices, protection of water quality, protection of natural resources, and the provision of adequate open space.

The control of three important parameters of land use intensity will allow for the application of subdivision controls on a performance standard basis. First, density - the number of dwelling units per acre of land - provides a fairly direct measure of the impact a development will have on utilities, roads, services and social and educational institutions. Less directly, it effects the impact of the development of the natural landscape and hydrological systems. Density standards should be used instead of lot size, thereby encouraging open space and more efficient land planning. Second, open space ratio is that proportion of a site neither occupied by private lots nor dedicated to public right-of-way. A ratio should be established for each new development though the ratio may vary according to the capacities of the natural resources on the site. Flexible development controls with high priority on open space can facilitate the construction of needed housing, while concurrently discouraging development of floodplains, steep slopes and other areas of high public concern. Third, the impervious surface ratio is that portion of a site occupied by all constructions that water does not readily penetrate. This is perhaps the most important measure of land use intensity. It will have direct influence on runoff and flooding, water quality, vegetation, inner-city climate and the natural resources of the site. The subdivision ordinance should encourage the lowest possible ratios of impervious coverage, regardless of density, through comprehensive site planning and innovative design.

Since adoption of this plan, Chapters 25-7 and 25-8 of the Land Development Code now include impervious cover limitations, based on watershed, that are enforced with subdivision plans, as well as requirements for construction on slopes, critical environmental feature protection, tree and natural area protection, and requirements for the provisions of water quality, flood and erosion control ponds to mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff.

### **Objective 313.0 Minimize the environmental impact of activities which are indirectly related to new development.**

*Policy 313.1 Establish regulations for the cutting of trees and vegetation*

The City should continue to regulate the removal or trimming of trees and vegetation on City property, right-of-way and easements. The City should also consider regulating the removal of trees on privately owned parcels. Any policies or regulations should recognize that redevelopment poses perhaps the greatest threat to urban vegetation. A

policy encouraging new planting and replanting would be supportive of this strategy. The City should encourage the philosophy of planting "The Right Tree in the Right Place." The City Code Section 6-3-62 sets out the distances from electric facilities for tree plantings and the Commercial Design Standards Section 2.2.2.3 speaks to the distance from facilities for location of trees.

Sections 25-8-601 and 627 of the Land Development Code establish tree protection requirements. This addition is necessary to address the City Code Section 6-32-62, which regulates plantings near utility infrastructure, and the Commercial Design Standards, Section 2.2.2.3

#### *Policy 313.1 Establish regulations for the cutting of trees and vegetation*

The City should continue to regulate the removal or trimming of trees and vegetation on City property, right-of-way and easements. The City should also consider regulating the removal of trees on privately owned parcels. Any policies or regulations should recognize that redevelopment poses perhaps the greatest threat to urban vegetation. A policy encouraging new planting and replanting would be supportive of this strategy.

Sections 25-8-601 and 627 of the Land Development Code establish tree protection requirements. This addition is necessary to address the City Code Section 6-32-62, which regulates plantings near utility infrastructure. The Commercial Design Standards, Section 2.2.2.3 speaks to the distance from facilities for location of trees. The City should encourage the philosophy of planting "The Right Tree in the Right Place."

#### *Policy 313.2 Improve regulations for all alterations to drainageways.*

Creek environments and floodplains should be retained in their natural condition. Specifically, the following controls should continue to be enforced on waterways: new structures should meet ordinance requirements in one hundred-year floodplains, only limited modifications should be made for drainage improvements, vegetation should be allowed to flourish within floodplains, except where health or safety are threatened, structures which must span waterways should not impede flood flows; and cutting and filling within the floodplain should be allowed only in extreme circumstances.

This policy is controlled by the 100- and 25-year flood plain development limitations (Land Development Code, 25-7-92), protection goals to maintain the natural and traditional character of waterways to the greatest extent feasible (LDC, 25-7-61), and cut/fill limitations (LDC, 25-8-341 and 342).

#### *Policy 313 3 Continue to support regulations for grading, cutting and filling*

The primary purpose of regulating these activities is to ensure that subdivision utilities and streets, drainage features and landscaping are not placed on the ground prior to subdivision approval. Regulations, especially near waterways, should be strictly enforced.

Cut/fill limitations are in the Land Development Code (25-8-341-342). Development near waterways is regulated by the establishment of the Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ) and Water Quality Transition Zone (WQTZ), both regulated by waterway classification, which include limitations of allowed development within these zones (Land Development Code, sections 25-8-261, 262, 25-8-392 and 393, 25-8-422 and 423, 25-8-452 and 453, and 25-8-482 and 483).

#### *Policy 313 4 Control off-road vehicle use on land designated as open space*

Lake Travis and Lake Austin offer good examples of degraded open space. nearly all public beaches are rutted by motor vehicle tracks and littered with trash.

Access should be provided to, but not through, parks and common open space. Appropriate control devices should be used.

### **GOAL 320.0 ASSURE THE SENSITIVITY OF DEVELOPMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES.**

The need for municipal control of development stems from the public character of certain land resources. Environmental regulations are primarily concerned with preventing hazards to safety or health, or adverse impacts on important natural resources.

**Objective 321.0 Provide sufficient environmental data to enable adequate evaluation of proposed developments.**

Information regarding natural features is necessary for the proper evaluation of any construction project. The City should continue to require information for subdivision development, public projects and private activities that are defined by the Land Development Code as development and should continue to enforce these requirements, including erosion controls for all development including construction of single family homes regulated through the building permit process and subdivision construction

Regulated through section 25-8 of the Land Development Code

*Policy 321.1 Provide more efficient procedures for subdivision applications to assure adequate review of environmental factors*

All pre-applications, preliminary applications, final plats and accompanying materials should be channeled through one City office. A coordinator should assure that all elements of the subdivision application are reviewed by the appropriate City departments in proper sequence

Subdivision development is regulated through section 25-8 of the Land Development Code and includes requirements for Environmental Assessments (section 25-8-21) which include a Hydrogeologic Report, Vegetation Report, Wastewater Report, and Pollutant Attenuation Plan for industrial uses.

*Policy 321.2 Continue to prohibit any alterations to development sites prior to the approval of the final subdivision plat and subdivision construction plan*

The Subdivision Ordinance should provide for a thorough review of the design and engineering aspects of development prior to any ground preparation or clearance. This assures that review decisions regarding basic design, transportation, drainage and utilities are neither precluded by premature development activities nor result in costly alterations. Penalties are enforced in cases where grading has occurred prior to submission of the subdivision applications

Regulated through section 25-8 of the Land Development Code

**Objective 322.0 Create and continue to support strong environmental standards for new development within the City limits and in the City's ETJ.**

This objective will involve investigating new ways of exercising development control. Subdivision regulation is most crucial outside the city limits and within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) where zoning and other City ordinances are not applicable. Existing enabling legislation should be used to extend the application of the City's current Subdivision Ordinance.

Environmental Standards established in Chapter 25-8 of the Land Development Code, affected by Title 30, SB 245,  
HB 1704

*Policy 322.1 Protect floodplains and waterways from development*

Not only does flooding present a hazard to life and property, but floodplains usually support the richest and most varied plant and animal life in the county. City codes and policies should continue to closely regulate residential and commercial development within one hundred-year floodplains considering the unique features of each waterway. Protection afforded by the Land Development Code, Chapters 25-7 and 25-8 should be continued to be enforced through the Subdivision Ordinance, or by the designation of a parkway system. Stream buffer zones should be enforced which do not necessarily coincide with the designated one hundred-year floodplains.

These regulations are currently supported by the subdivision requirements, pursuant to the Land Development Code, chapters 25-7 and 25-8. Refer to previous reference for development restrictions in the Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ) and Water Quality Transition Zone (WQTZ) of Chapter 25-8 of the Land Development Code.

*Policy 322.2 Establish and support development guidelines based on the physical and engineering constraints of the land*

A determination of erosion potential, slope stability, shrink-swell capacity, excavation potential, bearing capacity and septic tank suitability can be derived by analyzing the combined characteristics of soil, geology and slope. The

purpose of the guidelines should be to reduce the risk to public safety and the risk of property damage, to prevent uses of land which threaten to increase erosion and water pollution or require unsightly scarring of hillsides, and to check the high government costs of extending services and utilities and of controlling drainage, erosion and water pollution in special areas. Poorly regulated development in areas of high development constraint results in increased remedial expenditures. Some of this cost, particularly that related to drainage, streets and utilities, must be borne by the public. These improvements require specialized engineering and construction practices in areas of high constraint.

The Land Development Code regulations include requirements for net site area (section 25-8-262), construction on slopes (sections 25-8-301 through 304), clearing (sections 25-8-321 through 323), cut/hill and spoil (sections 25-8-341 through 343), environmental assessments (section 25-8-121) including a hydrologic report (section 25-8-122), requirement for a drainage study (section 25-7-31), and criteria for approval of site plans relative to erosion (section 25-7-61).

*Policy 322.3 Provide and support guidelines for drainage and runoff control that reduce erosion, peak flows and poor water quality*

Flooding, erosion and water pollution are directly related to urbanization and the development process. Adequate regulation is needed to mitigate water pollution caused by urban runoff, to alleviate the excessive runoff volumes and peak flow characteristics of developed areas which cause flooding downstream, and to prevent future remedial public projects which create unsightly and costly alterations to the natural character of waterways. Drainage and runoff regulations should allocate more of the real costs of urbanization to the private sector. In the past, some of these costs have been publicly subsidized in the form of expenditures for expensive drainage projects. Other costs, such as those which pertain to water pollution, have been assumed by no one.

Water Quality Controls are required based on watershed classification (Land Development Code, 25-8-213). Two-year detention for erosion control is required (LDC, 25-7-61). Flood controls are required by the Land Development Code (section 25-7-61) and the Drainage Criteria Manual to regulate peak flow rates for the two-, ten-, twenty-five- and one-hundred-year frequency storms to prevent inundation of any building or roadway surface. The Watershed Protection and Development Review Department also has programs that are approved by Council through the annual budget process which address water quality education (Grow Green, Pet Waste Reduction) that are successfully targeted at key areas where bacteria and nutrients are high and has implemented a program and regulatory response to eliminate coal tar as a source of water pollution (ordinance 20051117-070).

*Policy 322.4 Create ample minimum open space requirements for new residential development*

Open space should be provided within a short walk of most dwellings in new developments. Subdivision controls should incorporate such a requirement. Open space may be either dedicated to the public, acquired or remain as common private land. Likewise, it may be either improved for recreational use or left as a natural resource protection area. This policy would also aid in the regulation of density and impervious surfaces.

Currently, the parkland dedication ordinance (Land Development Code, 25-1, Article 14) supports this goal, as does the 40% natural area requirement for development in water supply rural watersheds (Land Development Code, 25-8-454).

*Policy 322.5 Continue to preserve unique areas and protect certain sensitive areas from the effects of development*

Controls on development should assure that natural assets of highest public value whether geological, hydrological, archaeological or vegetative, remain as open space. These controls should be integrated with open space requirements, coupled perhaps with development incentives. Outright purchase, or purchase of easements in advance of development may be preferable to subsequent dependence on open space requirements in subdivision regulations.

This policy is supported by targeted open space acquisition (Water Quality Protection Lands and Balcones, Canyonlands Preserves), net site area requirements (Land Development Code, 25-8-62), Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ) and Water Quality Transition Zone (WQTZ) limitations (LDC, 25-8-92-93), CEF setbacks (LDC, 25-8-281 and 282), and Tree and Natural Area preservation requirements (LDC, 25-8-601-627).

*Policy 322.6 Continue to protect vegetation during the development process*

Subdivision controls should incorporate site guidelines designed to preserve wooded vegetation. Street design, the siting of structures and the allocation of open space should accommodate this policy. A minimum of vegetation should be removed in order to control erosion and sedimentation.

This policy is supported by 40% Natural Area requirements for Hill Country Roadways Land Development Code, 25-2, Article 9, Division 3, Tree and Natural Area Preservation Ordinance (LDC, 25-8-601 through 267), clearing of vegetation control (LDC, 25-8-321), Environmental Assessment Requirements including a vegetative report (LDC, 25-8-121-123), and Save Our Springs turf limitations (Environmental Criteria Manual 16.9.2.E).

#### **Policy 322 7 Strengthen the septic tank ordinance**

The soils in most of Travis County offer severe limitations to the proper functioning of septic tank systems. The use of septic tanks in these areas has long been recognized as a threat to the quality of both surface and ground water. Austin has an obligation to abate water pollution within its regulatory control area.

The City of Austin is an Authorized Agent of The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Water Utility is a Designated Representative to administer the On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSF) Program. The TCEQ was previously named the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC). The program falls primarily under the authority of TCEQ rules contained within 30 TAC Ch.285 On-Site Sewage Facilities. Additional regulatory authority is derived from Texas Health and Safety Code, Title 5, Section C, Ch. 341 and Section D, Ch. 366 of Sanitation and Environmental Quality. The City Ordinance No 990211-E and the City Code Ch.15-5, adopt the current Ch. 285 as its local rule.

#### **Policy 322 8 Create development standards based on noise impact and air quality**

This policy primarily involves establishing guidelines for the construction of housing near major traffic arterials, the municipal airport, Bergstrom Air Force Base, and commercial or industrial areas.

#### **Objective 323.0 Establish and maintain environmental standards for extending streets and utilities into environmentally sensitive areas.**

The extension of all streets and utilities should be coordinated with a growth management policy. Environmental sensitivity should be foremost for all location decisions. Specific location and construction guidelines are necessary to minimize environmental damage.

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) and other school district agreements established standards for development in environmentally sensitive areas. The Land Development Code (section 25.8-301) established standards for construction of roadways on steep slopes. Environmental assessments are required for development in environmentally sensitive areas and include a requirement for justification of roadway and utility alignments (LDC, 25.8-121). Standards are established for the approval of utility service extensions (LDC, 25.9-34), and the City may request environmental assessments for the evaluation of service extension requests.

*Policy 323.1 Require the public evaluation of environmental impacts for all utility construction.*

The purpose of the environmental impact assessment is to ensure that the direct and indirect impacts of utility extension are considered. These assessments need not follow National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines nor be extensive and costly. The assessments should consider the relative merits and drawbacks of projects and alternatives. City departments, boards and commissions should have the opportunity to review and comment. These assessments should be required of all major Capital Improvements Program projects.

Environmental assessments are required for construction over the Edward's Aquifer recharge and contributing zone, for areas within the Critical Water Quality or Water Quality transition zone, in a floodplain or where slopes are greater than 15%. Policy 323.1 would significantly increase the cost of construction for water, wastewater, electric and stormwater. Austin Energy responds to demand and reliability of the service area. It is required by the Public Utility Commission to provide safe and reliable service to our customers and is reviewed by Watershed Protection for substations. Austin Energy's line extensions are reviewed by the General Permit inspector and utility coordination staff.

*Policy 323.2 Reduce cutting and filling for highway construction*

Loop 360, west of Austin, serves as an example of extensive hillside scarring which must be avoided in the future. Public improvements of this sort greatly detract from the natural beauty of the hill country.

Construction on slopes is regulated (Land Development Code, 25-8-301) and impervious cover limits on slopes are enforced through both subdivision and site plan permits. Cut and fill is restricted to four feet for roadway construction outside of the right of way (LDC, 25-8-341 and 342). Deletion of "newly constructed" by consensus.

**Policy 323.3 *Keep the impervious coverage of land at a minimum***

Impervious surfaces are those portions of a site occupied by all constructions that water does not readily penetrate

Guidelines should be maintained in the Subdivision Ordinance which regulate the allowable coverage by impervious surfaces. The subdivision controls should encourage the lowest possible ratios of impervious coverage, regardless of density, through use of comprehensive site planning and innovative design. Holding ponds and other water retention facilities are also required to reduce runoff to a volume and quality more closely resembling that which would exist under natural conditions

Impervious cover limitations are included in the Land Development Code and are enforced through the subdivision process. The Land Development Code, section 25-7-61, requires flood detention and erosion detention ponds, and sections 25-8-211 and 523 establish requirements for water quality ponds for the treatment of stormwater runoff, for both subdivision and site plan construction.

**GOAL 330.0 PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE WATER QUALITY OF TRAVIS COUNTY'S CREEKS, LAKES AND AQUIFERS.**

The quality of numerous water resources in and near Austin has already been seriously endangered by the process of urbanization. The city should strive to protect its nearby water resources in order to maintain a healthy water supply and prevent expensive treatment prior to public use, to maintain the excellent recreational utility of the nearby lakes and springs and to maintain the quality of water resources

The City should actively pursue these goals through comprehensive utilization of pertinent state-enabling legislation. Included is Section 21.357 of the Texas Water Code, which enables the development of plans for controlling and decreasing pollution or potential pollution from generalized discharges of waste which are not traceable to a specific source, such as storm sewer discharges, and urban runoff from rainwater.

Current environmental standards are governed by chapter 25-8 of the Land Development Code, and the Smart Growth Initiative establishment of the Drinking Water Protection Zone (DWPZ).

### **Objective 331.0 Improve the quality of water runoff and lessen peak discharge.**

Most of Austin's water pollution is due to rain runoff from urban areas. Control of runoff includes the reduction of peak surface discharges, and will help to alleviate water quality problems and diminish erosion and flooding. Controls should also reduce the need for channel improvements and improve the appearance of waterways.

Water Quality Controls for the treatment of stormwater runoff are based on watershed classification (Land Development Code, 25-8-213). Flood Controls are required by the Land Development Code (section 25-7-61) and the Drainage Criteria Manual, such that stormwater runoff peak flow rates for the two-, ten-, twenty-five-, and one-hundred-year frequency storms shall not cause increased inundation of any building or roadway surface.

#### *Policy 331 1 Minimize the impervious coverage of land by construction*

Watershed classifications were established in chapter 25-8 of the Land Development Code that provides different impervious cover limits based on the sensitivity of the watershed and its role in water supply.

#### *Policy 331 2 Develop alternatives for the treatment of drainage from extensive pavement*

Pavement collects residues which normally wash into streams during rainstorms. Some treatment facilities should be included in the installation of all large areas of pavement. In some areas this procedure may also be extended to public streets. Grease traps will not cleanse runoff water, but may remove a large portion of organic and inorganic oils. The addition of settlement basins would further remove sediment.

Water Quality Controls for the treatment of stormwater runoff are required, based on classification of watersheds (Land Development Code, 25-8-213). The Urban Watersheds Structural Control Fund was established for use in retrofitting water quality controls in urban watersheds (LDC, 25-8-214). The redevelopment exception (LDC, 25-8-

26) allows for the redevelopment of highly impervious sites in exchange for adding current water quality controls or, in the BSZ, in exchange for adding water quality controls and purchasing off-site mitigation lands (LDC, 25-8-27).  
Traps, catch basins, and interceptors to remove waste contaminating oil, grease, sand or other harmful materials are required (LDC, 6-5-52), and a stormwater discharge permitting program has been established to regulate businesses that discharge into storm drain systems (LDC, 6-5-57).

**Policy 331 3 Encourage ponding and other forms of runoff retention in drainage plans for new development**

Various methods of runoff retention allow sediment to settle, thereby improving creek water quality, reduce surface flow speed, thereby reducing erosion, and allow runoff to reach drainageways gradually thereby reducing flood potential All development plans should consider the need for runoff retention

Water Quality Controls for the treatment of stormwater runoff are required, based on classification of watersheds (Land Development Code 25-8-213). The Urban Watersheds Structural Control Fund was established for use in retrofitting water quality controls in urban watersheds (LDC, 25-8-214). The redevelopment exception (LDC, 25-8-26) allows for the redevelopment of highly impervious sites in exchange for adding current water quality controls or, in the BSZ, in exchange for adding water quality controls and purchasing off-site mitigation lands (LDC, 25-8-27).  
Traps, catch basins, and interceptors to remove waste contaminating oil, grease, sand or other harmful materials are required (LDC, 6-5-52), and a stormwater discharge permitting program has been established to regulate businesses that discharge into storm drain systems (LDC, 6-5-57).

**Policy 331 4 Assure that development in the more environmentally sensitive watersheds meets water quality and drainage standards.**

Development will result in permanent alteration of the water quality and drainage characteristics of a waterway This should be minimized and confined to as few drainage areas as possible. Ideally, urban development should be considered in new watersheds only after those closer to the city are fully developed. In addition, certain waterways may be deemed more valuable than others. Barton Creek and certain tributaries of Onion Creek, for example, supply most of the recharge water to the Edwards aquifer in Travis County.

Watershed classifications were established in chapter 25-8 of the Land Development Code, which establishes development restrictions in the form of varying impervious cover limits, restrictions on development on slopes,

waterway setback requirements, and water quality control requirements to treat stormwater runoff that are based on the sensitivity of the watershed and its role in water supply, including the non-degradation standard for water quality in the Barton Springs Zone (LDC 25-8.514)

**Policy 331 5 Require erosion and sediment control during construction**

Soil loss and stream siltation are often severe during construction activities. Numerous inexpensive procedures can minimize this damage. Each construction project should have an effective erosion and sediment control plan, and inspections of the site should ensure that it is followed.

Temporary erosion and sedimentation controls are required for all development until permanent revegetation has been established (Land Development Code, 25-8 Article 5.)

**Objective 332.0 Improve the collection and disposal of wastewater.**

Wastewater has always been a threat to water quality. The best possible methods for collection and treatment should be utilized.

**Policy 332 1 Prohibit the use of septic tank systems in areas where soil, topography or kindred factors are not favorable jurisdiction**

Travis County has the regulatory authority over septic and alternative waste systems outside the City's full purpose jurisdiction

**Policy 332 2 Consider the use of new alternative methods of sewage disposal for individual residential units in unserved areas.**

**Policy 332 3 Discourage the discharge of sewage effluent into waterways**

The effects of a proliferation of package treatment plants on the environments of Travis County's creeks could be profound unless effluent is retained for irrigation of open space or regional wastewater facilities are used. The City should oppose all applications for package treatment plant permits which allow discharge into creeks and waterways, and the City should ensure that all new developments which will depend on package plants reserve adequate open space for irrigation

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality January 2003 RG-357 Policy Statement encourages the regionalization of wastewater facilities to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Texans.

**Policy 332.4 Provide improved treatment for Austin's municipal sewage**

Tertiary treatment will improve the quality of effluent from Austin's secondary treatment facilities.

**Policy 332.5 Avoid placing sewer lines in creekbeds**

Creekbeds and their environs have traditionally been considered the most cost-effective routes for wastewater collection lines due to gravity flow. Some infiltration and exfiltration is to be expected of all sewage pipes, though the amount is highly dependent on the care exercised during construction. Sewage lines in creekbeds greatly aggravate the problems of infiltration and exfiltration. The proximity of sewage flow to creek flow, with the accompanying potential for exchange, should be avoided whenever possible. Alternate routes should be sought

Where creeks are used for recreation, or feed into a water supply, the costs of alternative location should be compared with the costs of replacing the recreational facility and the costs of additional water treatment

Wastewater lines are prohibited in the Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ), except for necessary crossings (Land Development Code, 25.8-361), and the Austin Clean Water Program has removed numerous wastewater lines from the creek beds during the implementation of this program.

**Objective 333.0 Investigate alternative methods of sewage collection and treatment and employ the best combination of sewage systems obtainable for all areas of Travis County.**

Travis County offers a diverse assortment of terrain, geology and soils. The characteristics individual residential treatment systems, small private sewage collection and treatment systems, including the alternatives to septic tank systems, and the extension of large municipal systems should be thoroughly analyzed. The physical conditions of each newly developing area should then be evaluated to determine the appropriate system

*Policy 333 1 Assure that wastewater house service lines are well constructed and that installation is strictly inspected.*

Surveys have indicated that faulty residential service lines are responsible for the majority of sewer infiltration problems. High quality materials and careful construction should be required and installation of the lines should be monitored

*Policy 333 2 Maintain the enforcement of the Industrial Waste Ordinance.*

The Industrial Waste Ordinance establishes essential, but rather ambitious controls on the discharge of abnormal or toxic wastes to either the sanitary sewer system or the storm sewer system. Adequate staff is needed to ensure that all appropriate establishments apply for permits, that monitoring is accomplished and that surcharges are judiciously applied

Traps, catch basins, and interceptors to remove waste contaminating oil, grease, sand or other harmful materials are required (Land Development Code, 6-5-52). A stormwater discharge permitting program has been established (LDC, 6-5-57) and pretreatment and monitoring is required (LDC, 6-5-58)

**GOAL 340.0 IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF SOLID WASTE.**

The City should seek the most environmentally sound and feasible methods of waste disposal

**Objective 341.0 Begin planning for the resource recovery of waste.**

The City should seek a cost-efficient program of solid waste recovery. Waste recovery programs need not be financially self-sufficient. The costs should be weighed against the alternate economic costs of land disposal plus the environmental and social costs of additional landfills.

An alternative target could be seeking the most efficient and modern technologies for solid waste recovery. The City should be aggressive in its pursuit of innovative recycling efforts that assist with Solid Waste recovery. The Zero Waste plan, which will increase landfill life and reduce the need for an infinite number of landfills, is an example of a creative effort to plan for the recovery of waste. Another way to plan for waste recovery is to help to create new markets for recycling.

*Policy 341 1 Create programs to salvage and recycle waste collected by the City.*

The City should determine which types of waste can be marketed or reused and which methods are most appropriate for extracting these items.

The City has several programs already in existence in which items picked up are also recycled. Austin has a very successful green waste program, where 100 percent of all its green waste is collected and composted. Items such as aluminum cans are sold and recycled. A pilot for glass is underway downtown and a plot for plastic bags is planned. The City is constantly looking to create markets to use recycled materials.

*Policy 341 2 Consider the conversion of wastes to useable by-products such as compost, or utilize waste for fuel*

Processes to convert waste into useable by-products need investigation as alternative means of disposal. When considering financial viability, the cost of production minus the revenue from the products should be compared with the alternative cost of complete land disposal plus environmental costs.

Some alternative waste disposal systems seek to recover the heat potential of waste for fuel. These merit investigation and should be attempted with the prior removal of as many non-combustibles as possible.

*Policy 341 3 Discourage the sale of non-returnable containers.*

A similar strategy has been undertaken in the state of Oregon. It is usually accomplished by requiring deposits on all glass and metal containers of certain types

**Objective 342.0 Locate landfills properly and employ only the most environmentally sound designs and disposal methods.**

The city will always need landfills, regardless of the success of waste resource programs, there will always be elements of residue which cannot be utilized. The City must strive to maintain the best possible operating procedures and utilize the best fill and site designs which should, as a consequence, improve the public image of landfills

Policy 342.1 *Landfill sites should be selected with full consideration of geologic characteristics and the preservation of surface and ground water quality*

Policy 342.2 *Landfill sites should be managed and closed according to long range plans which determine the ultimate use of the land.*

Deletion of 'finished' and addition of 'closed' based on Consensus.

**GOAL 350.0 ABATE NOISE DISTURBANCES.**

Noise is a growing concern to Austin residents.

**Objective 351.0 Reduce transportation related noise.**

Practically all noise problems in Austin are related to transportation, and the major proportion of the city's total environmental noise is generated by road traffic

Implementation of the Bicycle and Pedestrians Master Plan could reduce automobile miles traveled, which could affect transportation related noise

**Policy 351 1 Minimize road vehicle noise.**

Many of the motorcycles, automobiles and trucks operating in Austin emit excessive noise. In all cases, proper muffling installed by individual operators can remedy the problem. Vehicle owners should be required to make this investment in muffling equipment, and monitoring should be more frequent than the yearly safety inspection. Specific noise standards for each class of vehicle should be established and enforced.

**Policy 351 2 Improve the design of residential areas relative to major arterials, and promote the use of buffers along major traffic routes.**

Major arterials should be planned and designed in advance of development. Buffer strips of open space and vegetation should be encouraged along these major roads. The width of the buffer strip should be related to the anticipated traffic noise and to the adjacent land use.

**Policy 351 3 Restrict non-compatible land uses near Austin-Bergstrom International Airport**

Prevent the creation of hazards that obstruct the airspace in and around the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA), or interfere with visual, radar, or other systems controlling aircraft, creates a wildlife hazard, and establishes Land Use Regulations that protects the airport from encroachment of noise-sensitive land uses

A Compatibility Land Use Zone should extend one-half mile from the established Day-Night Level noise contour line. The Airport Overlay Zones are intended to prevent the introduction of non-compatible land uses, such as residential uses, place of worship or schools in the vicinity of the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. Compatable uses, such as agricultural, commercial, and industrial uses will be permitted.

Change necessary to address the Airport Zoning Act (Chapter 241, Texas Local Government Code) and City ordinance 010809-78, which passed by Council on August 9, 2001, and amended City Code to add a new Chapter 25-  
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**Objective 352.0 Regulate noise from stationary sources.**

Though not as pervasive as traffic generated noise, sound from stationary sites can create a persistent annoyance to those who reside or work nearby. Generally, however, noise from stationary sources is much easier to monitor and regulate.

**Policy 352.1 Limit construction and repair work to particular daylight hours**

Prohibition of nighttime construction and repair activities is especially important when applied to public works projects and other activities which are located in residential areas. Emergencies, of course, create exceptions. Time limitations on noisy activity is perhaps the easiest and simplest way of reducing noise annoyance.

**Policy 352.2 Set specific noise performance standards for industry**

Noise is perhaps the easiest industrial performance standard to understand and monitor. Stringent noise standards should ensure that new industry provides adequate planning for, and investment in, noise reduction features.

**Policy 352.3 Control the location of noisy commercial establishments relative to residential areas**

Certain commercial enterprises, such as discotheques, nightclubs, gas stations, car washes and establishments which utilize loud speakers, have very significant local noise impact. Consider expanding existing ordinances and developing a new noise ordinance.

**Objective 353.0 Encourage acoustic considerations in residential construction.**

As opposed to control of outside sources of noise, residential acoustical features attempt to lessen noise disturbances as they impact the home environment. These features work well to absorb noises from air conditioning and

appliances inside the home. Acoustical controls are especially needed for houses that are adjacent to streets with high traffic volumes

*Policy 353.1 Improve noise insulation and noise reduction features in the building codes*

The presence of pervasive urban noise and the prevalence of noisy home appliances justifies public concern for reasonable acoustical features in new housing. Many related aspects such as air conditioning, plumbing and wall construction are already regulated

*Policy 353.2 Improve noise control features in multi-unit housing*

Due to the proximity of residences and common walls, noise problems are most crucial in multi-unit structures. Consequently, requirements for noise reduction features should be more stringent for these than for detached housing

## **GOAL 360.0 ABATE AIR POLLUTION.**

Air pollution is a concern to many Austin citizens. The automobile is recognized as the major source of air pollution in the city

Population growth has increased air pollution worries among Austin citizens. The Austin-San Marcos Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is currently in violation of the Federal health-based standard for ground-level ozone concentrations. Reducing regional ozone depends on lowering emissions of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, the two primary precursors of ozone. Pollution from cars and trucks is the leading contributor to ozone formation in Central Texas. In 2002 the Austin-Round Rock MSA entered into the Early Action Compact (EAC) in order to prepare and implement the Clean Air Action Plan. The EAC sets measurable, enforceable milestones for developing and implementing the Clean Air Action Plan which produces earlier achievement than the traditional nonattainment process. This policy is also supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

**Objective 361.0 Reduce the use of automobiles.**

Since automobiles are the major source of air pollution in Austin, the reduction of total vehicle miles traveled per day would be the most effective way to mitigate the problem. It is necessary to create acceptable alternatives to the use of automobiles

*Policy 361 1 Upgrade the service and convenience of public transportation.*

In order to substantially effect automobile usage, the transit system must attract many "choice" riders, those who have automobiles available as an alternate transportation mode. "Choice" riders use the transit system only if the services of the system are attractive relative to automobile use, or if they are motivated by social or environmental concerns. The services of the public transit system must be improved to allow riders to arrive approximately at their destination quickly and directly. The probability of improving public transit enough to make it attractive relative to the automobile is slight, however, regardless of public expenditure

*Policy 361 2 Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle movement*

Many Austinites are discouraged from walking and bicycling due to the lack of safe, convenient routes. Safety and access for bicyclists and pedestrians are usually secured at the cost of a certain amount of motor vehicle convenience. Continuous routes with protected crossings at busy streets are needed throughout the city

Approximately 35% of the 1998 Bicycle Master Plan is complete. The plan is currently undergoing its first major amendment. New cost estimates and facility recommendations are being prepared, and policy will be presented in December 2008 for Council consideration.

*Policy 361 3 Provide incentives for car pooling and vanpooling*

Car pooling for work-related trips has been endorsed nationally as an energy conservation measure. Reduced automobile use, particularly during peak traffic hours, should result. Parking incentives, especially at places of employment, may prove to be most effective.

'Vanpooling' addition by consensus

**Policy 361 4 Reduce emissions generated by congested traffic through encouraging alternative work schedules**

Teleworking allows eligible employees to work from home and can reduce participants vehicle miles traveled. Compressed work week programs allows eligible employees to work four 10-hour days and take the fifth day off or nine-hour days and take the tenth day off. Working a compressed schedule typically reduces participants' VMT by one round trip per week and has a positive impact on air quality.

This policy addition is supported by the Austin Climate Protection Plan.

**Objective 362.0 Reduce Air Emissions from Fleet Vehicles.**

This objective includes fleet emission reduction policy designed to ensure that the City of Austin fleet emission obtains the cleanest operating vehicles possible and that operators drive these vehicles at maximum efficiency.

This new objective and subsequent policies address City policy (Austin Climate Protection Plan) that addresses City fleet policy.

**Policy 362 1 Purchase low-emission, alternative fuel, or best available vehicles for the City fleet.**

The greener a vehicle is the less fuel it uses. Less fuel burned means fewer natural resources consumed. Reducing fuel use means that less nitrogen oxide and particulate matter are emitted into the air.

This new objective and subsequent policies address City policy (Austin Climate Protection Plan) that addresses City fleet policy. In 1998, the City Council approved a grant for the City to receive funding to purchase a Hybrid Ford 250 for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program fleet vehicle, it is still currently this Section's vehicle.

*Policy 362 2 Expand the use of low-sulfur fuels, compressed natural gas, Propane and other alternative fuels available to fleet vehicles.*

Propane, natural gas, electricity, Hydrogen, Biodiesel and Ethanol are all alternatives to gasoline and diesel fuel. Increasing our use of alternative fuels reduces our dependence on foreign imports, promotes energy security, and provides cleaner emissions

This new objective and subsequent policies address City policy (Austin Climate Protection Plan) that addresses City fleet policy.

*Policy 362 3 Practice exceptional maintenance on all existing City vehicles*

According the U S Environmental Protection Agency, proper maintenance can reduce fuel demand by up to 15 percent and reduce air pollution

This new objective and subsequent policies address City policy (Austin Climate Protection Plan) that addresses City fleet policy.

**Objective 363.0 Reduce point-source and off-road mobile source air emissions.**

Industrial sources of air pollution are relatively minor in Austin. Electric power production is a significant source of air emissions which will have a greater impact if, and when, fuels other than natural gas are used

*Policy 363 1 Create air emission performance standards for point-sources*

Air performance standards may perhaps be implemented most effectively through ordinances or contractual agreements between the City and private industries

*Policy 363 2 Control dust emissions related to construction activities*

Construction practices which minimize dust emissions should be required of all projects. These procedures coincide with those used for erosion control and include the incremental removal of minimum amounts of vegetation and existing cover, temporary planting for ground cover and sprinkling. The utilization of these practices should be checked at the times of other regular inspections.

*Policy 363.3 Discourage the incineration of waste.*

Until waste recovery is perfected, landfilling remains the most appropriate method of residential and commercial waste disposal. The use of incinerators for volumetric reduction of wastes results in a poor tradeoff for air pollutants. Small incinerators tend to be the most inefficient.

*Policy 363.4 Place new power plants outside the urbanized area*

Power plants are a significant source of air emissions in Austin. New plants designed to burn fuel other than the relatively clean natural gas will have a much greater negative impact on air quality.

*Policy 363.5 Reduce emission from off-road mobile sources*

The City funds an incentive program through Austin Energy to encourage citizens to trade high-polluting, gas-powered lawnmowers for new electric models. Rebates are offered periodically. Lawnmower engines are not subject to on-road regulations for efficiency. They are often surprisingly bad polluters. Electric and propane lawn equipment are better alternatives. Policy addition also addresses the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023.

**Objective 364.0 Reduce emissions from mobile sources by educating local businesses and the public to promote behavior change.**

Objective added to address the Austin Climate Protection Plan. The objective promotes ozone reduction by educating the public about the role their actions play in improving area air quality.

*Policy 364.1 Conduct outreach to residents and local businesses to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation and other ozone-reducing activities*

Objective added to address the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023. The objective promotes ozone reduction by educating the public about the role their actions play in improving area air quality.

*Policy 364.2 Contact private and public entities with the objective of coordinating voluntary air quality strategies for constructing equipment operating within the Austin Area*

Objective added to address the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023. The objective promotes ozone reduction by educating the public about the role their actions play in improving area air quality.

*Policy 364.3 Promote voluntary idling restrictions*

Objective added to address the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023. The objective promotes ozone reduction by educating the public about the role their actions play in improving area air quality.

*Policy 364.4 Coordinate an ozone action day notification and response system*

Objective added to address the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023. The objective promotes ozone reduction by educating the public about the role their actions play in improving area air quality.

**GOAL 370.0 ABATE LIGHT POLLUTION.**

**Objective 371.0** Restrict the use of high intensity lighting and obtrusive flashing lights except where essential for public safety or emergency situations.

Policy 371.1 Devise standards for the use of display lighting

Policy 371.2 Devise standards for glare and reflection near major traffic arterials